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Dr. Worcester's chapters upon such subjects as "Christianity and the Social Question," "The Law of Increase," "The Good Samaritan," "Idealism and Devotion," serve a threefold purpose. Written from an avowedly Christian viewpoint, they are exhortations to faith; they are also resolute and frank applications of Christian doctrine to life; and finally they serve as pragmatic arguments for belief, since they show the need and practical efficiency of religion in the world's affairs. Even more interesting than these are the chapters which deal with the more personal aspects of religion. The belief that repentance and faith can make over a man's character almost in an instant can no longer be regarded as a mere affirmation of sentiment or dogma; the miracle of sudden "conversion" is as well attested as any of the miracles of science. In one case, of which the author tells, a man of force and education, after relating in detail the story of his complete ruin and downfall—a story almost wholly devoid of redeeming features—was induced to kneel and ask forgiveness of God. "He knelt in silence for perhaps five minutes. When he rose he looked at me and I saw something in his face which was not there before. He said very quietly, 'God has heard my prayer, and I am saved.' . . . The vice and evil which had desolated his life simply ceased, and in this place a character of such purity, sweetness, and unselfishness was born that I cannot speak of it without shame to myself."

Significant of the author's point of view is his discussion of prayer. Religious intuition has always upheld the efficacy of prayer, and the experiences and observations of Dr. Worcester convince him, independently of faith, that prayer is a power incalculably great but ill understood. There was a time when the question chiefly raised was the question of failure: how can it be that we sometimes ask and do not receive? Now it has become possible to shift the ground and ask how it is that prayer ever succeeds. Dr. Worcester suggests that without surrendering present faith we may hope that science in the future will teach us vastly more than we know now concerning the nature and use of this mysterious influence. "Sometimes we pray with conviction and power, and our prayers are mighty and effective. In some way we have fulfilled the necessary conditions and have come in contact with the Source of power, but we know not how we did it. Sometimes for weeks and months our prayers seem to rise no higher than the ceiling of our rooms and to accomplish nothing, yet we know not why. Should we understand prayer as Jesus understood it, all things would be possible to us; but we are groping amid the very rudiments of it."

*Religion and Life* is not, of course, a formal effort to establish the truths of Christianity on rational grounds, nor does the author advance any one definite thesis. But perhaps the book will accomplish more than could a formal argument. In many different ways it imparts the invigorating assurance that there is nothing contrary to science or common sense in believing that life is at bottom a spiritual affair.

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LITTLE ESSAYS IN LITERATURE AND LIFE. By RICHARD BURTON. New York: The Century Company, 1914.

The essays contained in this volume are indeed "little," in the sense of brevity, and some of them are on rather hackneyed themes. There are no originalities of the first water in the book, but there are no mere

artificialities, mannered as the author's style sometimes seems. Professor Burton is incorrigibly literary, but we feel that he is heartily human too, and that insincerity is a thing his soul abhors. In the beginning, one may be, unfortunately, a little repelled by an apparent conventionality in the treatment of such subjects as "Immemorial Fires" and "The Miracle Called Spring"; but if the reader is lured to read on, which is not unlikely, he will find that the author has much to say, says it modestly, and with no little point. It is something to have found anything so good as, "The tragedy of growing old is that you feel so young," to say on a theme that has been written about by (among others) Cicero and Holmes. "The irony of success lies in its looking so successful" is a nutshell with a kernel in it, and the phrase "helpless gregariousness" as descriptive of those who "sit about in overlighted, stuffy rooms at summer resorts" is illustrative of an occasionally refreshing quality of expression. But the virtue of the book is not to any great extent epigrammatic. The author, indeed, seems quite willing to let his thought go clothed in others' garb, provided only the spirit be truly his. He quotes with great freedom: he cites Longinus, Solomon, the Declaration of Independence, writers of all sorts and ages, with facility and appositeness. There is always something taking in this Emersonian way of drawing in wisdom from all sources and using it for the present purpose with no false sense of congruity. It is done in the spirit of one who is really free of the literary commonwealth. The essays are agreeably bookish, and they are all warm with idealism. Professor Burton, half as scholar, half as poet, sets forth what may be called the literary gospel—the faith in the goodness and beauty of things that exist independently of religious teaching. He pleads for a poetic view of life compatible with common sense, and makes us feel that if we want to be happy we must truly cultivate the youthful side of ourselves, but that this cannot easily be done unless we cultivate also the arts of reflection and literary enjoyment as parts of the great art of living. More than once he says the obviously right thing with an unpretentiousness that leaves the sanity of his view almost too unimpressive. Writing of "matter-of-fact fiction," he remarks: "We can agree with Howells that the commonplace is precious, and yet leave room for the uncommon. And we cannot assent to the thing we know, yet welcome the fascinating hitherto unknown, for these larger experiences help us to grow."

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HEBREW AND BABYLONIAN TRADITIONS. By MORRIS JASTROW, Jr., Ph.D., professor of Semitic languages in the University of Pennsylvania. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914.

Professor Jastrow's treatise, which is composed of the Haskell lectures delivered at Oberlin College in 1913, and since revised and enlarged, is highly readable; the treatment is on the whole popular rather than technical, although it is characterized by the conscientious accuracy and conservatism of scholarship. In expounding a complex subject, as full of uncertainty as of interest, the author's definiteness of aim and his unmistakable, consistent emphasis on the points he deems of most importance are most helpful.

When through a brief review of the historic evidence, we have been made to see the probability that Hebrews and Babylonians belonged to a common